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Status and Prospects of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh with special edge of Revenue Perspectives: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

The article discussed the status and prospects of tourism industry in Bangladesh. It has found that tourism industry in Bangladesh is growing, but is not developed. Bangladesh has more prospect in heritage tourism, adventure tourism, agri-tourism, sports tourism, rural tourism, and religious tourism. Bangladesh offers many tourist attractions, including rolling tea gardens, hill forests and wildlife, picturesque landscape, longest natural beach in the world, historical mosques and monuments, archaeological sites, and colourful tribal life very enchanting. With the country's unmatched biodiversity, diverse landscapes, and rich cultural heritage, there's immense potential to make tourism a cornerstone of sustainable development. Cox's Bazar in the longest unbroken sea beach in the world and the tourist capital of Bangladesh. The country has three UNESCO world heritage sites. It plays a significant role directly and indirectly in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of Bangladesh by creating new employment opportunities for both male and female, alleviating poverty, enhancing local community participation, earning foreign currency via foreign tourists. Tourism is a growing sector and contributing nearly 2.3 % of total GDP in 2023. There are many challenges before the tourism industry, such as inadequate funding, low engagement of local communities, insufficient safety and security, inappropriate marketing strategies, ineffective promotional efforts, obstacle to communication, and limited budget for promoting tourism overseas. Therefore, government should implement policies for mitigating such challenges, and develop the tourism industry in a new horizon.

Keywords: Forest, Hotel, Lakes, Restaurant, Sea beach, and Tourism industry.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is commercial movement of giving administrations for individuals traveling for joy, and the travel itself. It can too allude to the collection of businesses included in tourism, counting transportation, settlement, amusement, nourishment and refreshment administrations, and retail. Tourism may be a major source of income for numerous nations, and it can contribute to financial thriving, employments, pay, and prosperity. Sightseers spend cash on these administrations, which directly contributes to the nearby economy. Tourism could be a social, social and financial wonder which involves the development of individuals to nations or places exterior their normal environment for individual or business/professional purposes. Tourism produces salary and makes preparing openings and effectively open employments, as well as deals markets for administrations and neighbourhood items. Tourism offers awesome openings for rising economies and creating nations. The key victory components for feasible tourism incorporate natural preservation, community engagement, and social conservation. It's vital to include neighbourhood communities, give financial benefits, and regard social legacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Afroz and Hasanuzzaman (2012) discussed the challenges and prospects of Bandarban tourism. Tourism is a growing industry in Bangladesh. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. Bandarban is one of the region of Bangladesh blessed with incomparable beauty. Das and Chakraborty (2012) determined the contribution of tourism sector to the overall gross domestic product of Bangladesh and its future prospects. Tourism is one of the most promising sectors in the country with its immense natural beauty. Parveen (2013) studied the current growth and development of tourism industry and also the limitations

and challenges of the industry. The study mainly highlights the current position of the tourism industry, its contribution to economic development and the share of tourism in Bangladesh compared to SAARC nations. Musa (2013) said that government and non-governmental organizations that play a significant role in the development of the tourism industry of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government should take necessary steps to encourage the private sector to play a positive role in the development and diversification of tourism facilities to promote domestic and international tourism. Chowdhury (2013) found that tourism is considered as the largest and fastest growing industry in the modern business world. It can play a significant role in the economic development of the country. However, this industry in Bangladesh is not achieving its goals due to inappropriate marketing practices. Mamun and Andaleeb (2013) focused on the healthcare professionals in Bangladesh. By doing so, they will be able to improve the local healthcare industry and retain patients in Bangladesh. Hassan and Burns (2014) shown the need for creating an effective tourism policy. Tourism, being an important part of any country's economy. As a potential destination for tourism and internationally, Bangladesh also needs a proper and effective policy.

Hasan and Hossain (2014) believed that tourism can be beneficial to the economy. However, due to poor policies and poor management of small and medium scale enterprises, the business cannot meet the expectations. There are many entrepreneurs in the business sector who are facing small financial problems. Hasan and Jobaid (2014) found that the heritage tourism industry plays a vital role in attracting tourists to heritage sites. Bangladesh is rich in historical and archaeological sites. The country has all the potential to become an important part of the world heritage. Majumder (2015) highlighted the direct impact of tourism in promoting economic growth and identified the existing gaps that hinder the development of the business. Roy and Roy (2015) focused on tourism in Bangladesh and the contribution of Bangladesh's tourism industry. A large number of tourists from home and abroad visit the country and its tourists to enjoy the beauty of nature. If the economy cannot sustain adequate growth, its contribution to the country's economy will lag behind in the future. Mondal (2017) stated that the tourism sector is facing many problems and its development is not sustainable. Government has taken multiple policies for the development of the industry. Mowla (2019) reported that the National Tourism Policy 2010 has nine policies or principles, all of which are based on the concept of tourism. Mowla (2019) stated that Institutions specializing in tourism education, IT education and business activities such as tourism agencies, tourism operators, hotels, technology service providers need to cooperate and constantly communicate to develop the knowledge base of the business for the beauty industry and complete navigation.

Biswas and Rashid (2019) investigated the problems faced by tourists while traveling in Bangladesh. International tourists are less satisfied with the accommodation, transportation, security and other services of Bangladesh. Hossain & Islam (2019) concluded that the government should consider tourism as one of the most important aspects of the development agenda. Strengthen the tourism industry and business development and create a group of experts and tourism service professionals. Huda et al. (2020) concluded that Bangladesh develops and promotes its food supply mostly through food diversity, value addition, food integration and basic economic measures. Food tourism is still prevalent in most hotels and restaurants in Bangladesh. Rahman and Tahsin (2020) future of tourism in Bangladesh, emphasized the link between business and finance for tourism development. The Bangladesh government is planning to create a more efficient and profitable business model for export business, which can play a significant role in the development, especially in terms of GDP, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings.

Polash and Habeb (2020) accepted that Bangladesh is the finest visitor destination with its slopes, valleys, timberlands, shorelines, lakes and streams. In spite of the fact that ecotourism is still a modern sort of tourism in Bangladesh, ecotourism is on the rise and efforts are being made to advance it within the nation. Tasnim and Akter (2020) have said some practical proposals for utilizing social media as a publicizing instrument within the future. It too proposed challenges and potential of utilizing social media as a special instrument to create the tourism potential of Bangladesh. According to Akhtar et al. (2021), despite facing great challenges, Bangladesh's economic development has created employment, creativity and new technologies, knowledge transfer, innovation, social welfare and most importantly, has helped the country create a "beautiful image of Bangladesh" Islam (2021) stated that Bangladesh is a place known for its beautiful landscapes. The country is known for its beautiful features that attract people. In addition to being the longest beach in the world, loved by tourists, it is also a Bangladeshi heritage and natural site.

Nandy et al. (2021) concluded that tourism has a significant impact on wildlife conservation, youth, women workers, rural development, heritage and the country. Therefore, accelerating revenues by increasing the confidence of international tourists and domestic tourists is the top priority of the government. Ali (2021) concluded that the Buriganga Ecological Park is not good in terms of its ecological park as well as its economic, environmental and cultural aspects. Horaira and Devi (2021) focused on cultural tourism in Bangladesh by presenting facts such as history and culture, cultural tourism, expectations, development and other things. It is loved by local and foreign tourists. Accordingly, Islam and Aktruzaman (2021), the beauty of the mountains, the

unique ecosystem of the Sundarbans, the friendship of mountains and clouds, the bright shade of green trees and forests, the vastness of the sea, the world's longest beaches, archaeological sites, religious sites, rich tea plantations give Bangladesh a great potential in the tourism.

Sarker (2021) found that there are many ways to promote the concept of agriculture in Bangladesh and find new ways to contribute to its overall economy. Tourism is an important part of the service sector. It can lead to development, when the right political and economic strategies are implemented. Nobi (2021) found that the presence of information such as forest maps, wildlife conservation signs, and hazardous areas also increases the number of visitors. Therefore, the Bangladesh government should consider increasing tourism entrance fees to facilitate the development and improvement of the ecotourism industry in the Sundarban mangroves. Accordingly, Alam (2022), education among the people of the nation is vital for increasing the growth of the tourism sector in the country. Kumar et al. (2022) identified the factors that cause the growth of tourism in Bangladesh. The study aims to find the main points that attract tourists to the country.

Khan (2022) stated the socio-economic indicators since Bangladesh's independence in 1971. Bangladesh, supported by sustainable economic development, has made remarkable progress in poverty reduction. Islam and Hossain (2023) evaluated economic activities, looked for related activities, assessed the growth of the economy and determined the necessary actions. Tourism has the advantage of providing employment opportunities to the local people and helping in poverty reduction. Kamal et al. (2023) investigated the reasons behind the elite and middle class' refusal to travel domestically and preferring to travel abroad more. Bangladesh's tourism industry has expanded significantly in recent years. Currently, Bangladesh's tourism sector relies on domestic tourists because there are few foreign tourists. Islam (2023) focused on rural tourism to increase income for rural population to reduce dependency on seasonal jobs (such as agriculture, fishing, boating), create other sources of income and secure jobs, and improve problem solving. through cooperation. in the city's tourism industry. According to Rimon et al. (2023), tourism is one of the growing industries not only in Bangladesh but also worldwide. Meanwhile, Sundarbans is considered as one of the best tourist places in Bangladesh, but few local people are interested in this tourism industry.

Caton et al. (2023) concluded that strengths and weaknesses of tourism can be assessed at national, regional or sub-national levels. However, determining social benefits is more essential. The success of a female entrepreneur in the business sector contributes to the overall business. This study uses qualitative techniques such as surveys, interviews, and in-depth analysis of business metrics to investigate the main reasons why women choose to start a business. Tahmina and Muhsina (2024) investigated the role of tourism organizations in tourism development in Bangladesh. Tourism organizations now play an important role in developing this relationship. Bangladesh is a very successful tourist destination due to its rich and beautiful natural resources such as beaches, beautiful landscapes, culture of the indigenous people, historical events, religious traditions, heritage, wildlife, and mountain resorts. Acker et al. (2024) reported on authorizing women businesspersons in the tourism sector in Bangladesh. The study shows a good business environment is vital to welcoming women in the travel and tourism industry.

Therefore, from the above analysis we can conclude that Bangladesh is a beautiful country. It has more potential in the tourism industry. Tourism industry has many challenges. Majority of the reports discussed the current status of the tourism industry in Bangladesh. Few reports discussed the economic perspectives of the tourism industry of Bangladesh.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are:

(a) To study the Status and Prospects of the Tourism Industry in Bangladesh.
(b) To examine the revenue generation from the Tourism Industry of Bangladesh.
(c) To evaluate various challenges before the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Hypothesis

On the basis of the objectives of the paper, we are prepared the following hypothesis-

H_{01}: There is no impact of the corona pandemic on the arrivals of international tourists in Bangladesh.

H_{1a}: There is impact of the corona pandemic on the arrivals of international tourists in Bangladesh.

H_{02}: There is no relationship between international tourist arrivals and Gross domestic product of Bangladesh.

H_{1b}: There is relationship between international tourist arrivals and Gross domestic product of Bangladesh.

Designs and Approach

This study is descriptive in design and has utilized qualitative and quantitative approaches. Secondary data for the study has been collected from various govt. reports, website of ministry of tourism, report of international agencies, and research papers. To reveal the travel and tourism industry in general and economic perspectives in particular, descriptive analysis, content text analysis, and regression analysis have been performed.

About the Study Area

Bangladesh is a fast growing country in south Asia. Its area is 148,460 square kilometres and is the eighth-most populous country within the world. It has land border with India and Myanmar. It has lengthy coastal line in the southern area. Siliguri corridor separated Bangladesh from Bhutan. Bengali and English are the major languages in Bangladesh. Dhaka is the capital and the largest city. It is the cultural, economic, and political hub. Chittagong is the port city and the second biggest metropolis. There are eight administrative divisions. There are 64 districts. Bangladesh is the 2nd largest economic system in South Asia. Bangladesh is full of natural beauty. Rivers, coasts and beaches, archaeological websites, spiritual locations, hills, forests, waterfalls, tea gardens surround it.

Method of Analysis

The simple regression is based on two variables. They are gross domestic products and arrivals of international tourists in Bangladesh. Gross domestic product is the dependent variable and arrivals of tourists are the independent variable. Regression analysis is calculated on information of gross domestic product and arrivals of international tourists in Bangladesh during 2014-2023. Information about the arrival of tourists and GDP in Bangladesh has been collected from the report "Bangladesh Economic Review 2023" published by Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism industry in Bangladesh is developing due to its natural beauty, enriched culture, and warmth climates. Bangladesh has many tourist locations, along with Sundarban, Bandarban, Sri Mongal, Jaflong, Ahsan Manzil, Cox's Bazar, and St. Martin's Island. Tourism in Bangladesh consists of tourism to tribal people, forests, picnic spots, beaches, motels, ancient monuments, global historical sites, and natural diverse species. Travellers can involve in variety of sports, together with water snowboarding, river cruising, trekking, rowing, yachting, and sea bathing. Tourism contributes Bangladesh's GDP, creating jobs, improving dwelling requirements, and foreign currency. The authorities are promoting tourism. but, tourism can also pose threats to a place's tradition culture and heritage.

There are three UNESCO world heritage sites in Bangladesh. They are Sundarbans, Paharpur Buddhist Ruins, and Mosque City. Mosque City is situated in Bagerhat District. It is spread over 50 square kilometres on moribund branch of the Bhairab River. The mosques were constructed in 15th century by Bengal Sultanate. Sixty Dome Mosque, Ronvijoypur Mosque, Bibi Begni Mosque, Tomb of Khan Jahan, Nine Dome Mosque, and Singar Mosque are popular among the travellers. There is a museum in front of the Shait Gumbaz Mosque. Somapura Mahavihara is a Buddhist Vihara that situated in Naogaon district, Rajshahi division. It is a Cultural heritage site. It is the architecture in pre-Islamic Bangladesh. Sundarbans is a mangrove forest area situated in Khulna Division of Bangladesh and Presidency division, West Bengal, India. It has islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forests, mudflats, and complex network of tidal waterways. It is known as "Land of Bengal tiger." It has various species of snakes, crocodiles, chital, and birds. The Sundarbans flora is characterised by keora, goran, gewa, and sundari. It has also variety of forest, such as swamp forest, brackish water mixed forest, saltwater mixed forest, littoral forest, and mangrove scrub. It has unique ecosystem having rich wildlife environment. Nearly 15% land under Sundarbans mangroves is protected area under Sundarbans West Wildlife, Sundarbans East, and Sundarbans South Sanctuaries in Bangladesh, and Sajnakhali Wildlife Sanctuary, and Sundarbans National Park in West Bengal.

(a) Status and Prospects of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Narayanganj, Comilla, and Mymensingh are the major cities in Bangladesh. Dhaka situated in north of the Buriganga River. National Museum Bangladesh, Hatirjheel, Khan Mohammad Masjid, Bangladesh National Zoo, Ramna Park, Armenian Church, Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Central Shaheed Minar, Tara Masjid, Liberation War Museum, Dhakeshwari National Temple, Bangladesh National Parliament, Ahsan Manzil Museum, and Lalbagh Fort are the major attraction in Dhaka city. Chittagong is a port city situated in bank of Karnaphuli River. It is the second largest city. The major tourist places in the city are Chittagong ship-breaking yard, Patenga beach, Foy's lake and amusement park, Chittagong circuit house, Shrine of Bayazid Bostami, The National Ethnological Museum, WWII memorial cemetery, Chittagong railway station, Fish harbour & market, and Battali Hills Park. Khulna is the third largest city that located in the bank of Rupsha and Bhairab River. Khulna is also called "city of shrimp." It is also known for its crab, catfish, prawn, and lobster. The major tourist attractions in the city are Khulna Museum, KhanJahan Ali Bridge, Shahid Hadis Park. KhanJahan Ali Bridge, and Shahid Hadis Park.

Table 1: Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 of South Asian Countries

Rank	Economy	Score	Change since 2019		Diff. from TTDI Avg. (%)
			Rank	Score	
39	India	4.25	-10	-2.1%	7.1%
76	Sri Lanka	3.69	-1	0.0%	-6.8%
101	Pakistan	3.41	3	3.6%	-14.0%
105	Nepal	3.34	0	2.8%	-15.7%

Rank	Economy	Score	Change since 2019		Diff. from TTDI Avg. (%)
			Rank	Score	
109	Bangladesh	3.19	2	3.0%	-19.5%

Source: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Travel_and_Tourism_Development_Index_2024.pdf

Table 1 discussed the Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 of South Asian Countries. It shows that Bangladesh is rated 109th out of 119 economies. Bangladesh received the lowest score (3.19 out of 7) out of the five South Asian nations included in the ranking. Rajshahi city is situated on the bank of Padma river. It is historically known for silk production, and often called as "Silk City" of Bangladesh. It is. the cleanest city of Bangladesh. Varendra Museum, Shah Makhdum Majar, Dhopkols, Bagha Mosque, Rajshahi University campus, Puthia Temple Complex, and Chhoto Sona Mosque are the major attraction of the city. Bangladesh is a country of colourful festivals. Basanta Utsab, Nabanna Utsab & Poush Mela, Pohela Boishakh, Baul Mela, Amor Ekushey, Victory Day, Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha, Durga Puja, and Buddha Purnima are the major festivals.

Sylhet is the largest city in eastern Bangladesh that situated on the bank of Surma River. It is the fifth-largest city in Bangladesh Sylhet region is well-known for tropical forests and tea gardens. Saint Hazrat Shah Jalal, and Ornate tomb are the popular religious places in the city. Sreemangal, Khadimnagar Rain Forest, Lalakhal, Jaflong, Bholaganj SadaPathor, Bisnakandi, and Ratargul Swamp Forest are popular tourist destinations outside the city. Narayanganj is the 6th largest city in Bangladesh that situated in banks of the Dhaleswari River and Sitalakhya River. Hajiganj Fort, Murapara Rajbari, Mayadeep, Zinda Park, Jamdani Palli, Tomb of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, and Panam Nagar are popular tourist destinations of Narayanganj. Comilla city is situated in eastern part of Bangladesh on the bank of Gumti River. Jagannath Temple, Ithakhola Mura, Viewnbuy, Dharmasagar Pond, Rupban Mura, Mainimati Ruins, and Shalban Bihar are the popular tourist destinations in Comilla. Mymensingh city is located in north-central Bangladesh. It is situated in bank of Old Brahmaputra River. Muktagacha Zamindar Bari, Birishiri, Alexander Castle, and Moyna Dip are the popular tourist destinations of Mymensingh.

Table 2: Number of International Tourist Arrivals in Bangladesh

Year	Arrivals	Year	Arrivals	Year	Arrivals
1995	156,000	2005	208,000	2015	126,000
1996	166,000	2006	200,000	2016	182,000
1997	182,000	2007	289,000	2017	237,000
1998	172,000	2008	467,000	2018	267,000
1999	173,000	2009	267,000	2019	323,000
2000	199,000	2010	139,000	2020	50000
2001	207,000	2011	157,000	2021	190000
2002	207,000	2012	160,000	2022	250000
2003	245,000	2013	104,000	2023	300000
2004	271,000	2014	134,000	2024	360000

Source: https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/bangladesh/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL,
https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1166651/international-tourist-arrivals-forecast-in-bangladesh

Table 2 depicts the arrival of international tourists in Bangladesh. The number of tourists increased, but declined in 2020 due to the corona pandemic. Domestic tourist arrival was more than 156 thousand in 1995, and 323 thousand in 2019, but it was dropped to only 50 thousand in 2020, and was increased to 190 thousand in 2021. Number of arrivals of international tourist arrivals doubled in nearly 30 years. Number of tourist arrivals declined in 2020 due to the corona pandemic. Lockdowns, and travelling restriction due to the corona pandemic are the main factors behind the sudden drop of the tourist arrivals. Therefore, the null hypothesis-1 is rejected and an alternative hypothesis is accepted, i.e. there is impact of the corona pandemic on the international tourist arrivals in Bangladesh.

Small and big rivers in Bangladesh increasing its natural beauty. There are nearly 700 rivers in the country. Padma, Meghna, Surma, and Jamuna are major rivers in the country. Chittagong Hill Tracts is the mountainous region of the country. It is blessed with natural beauty. The region has some extra-ordinary tourist attractions. It is combined by three districts, e.g. Bandarban, Khagrachhari, and Rangamati. Nearly 12% land of the country is cover by hills. In the hilly areas ethnic groups are living in harmony with nature. Late November to early March is the best time to visit the region. Rangamati is also famous for fresh fruits and fishes of Kaptai lake. The major tourist destinations in Rangamati are Peda Ting Ting, Tribal Cultural Institute & Museum, Cable Car Ride, Shuvalong Jharna, Hanging Bridge, Kaptai National Park, and Kaptai Lake. Kaptai Lake is called "crown jewel of Rangamat." Bandarban

district is well-known for adventure tourism. Travellers can involve in camping, hiking, and trekking. Keokradong, Mowdok Mual, and Tahjindong peaks are located in the district. Nilachal, Nilgiri, Shoilo Propat, Rijuk Waterfall, Meghla Parjatan Complex, and Sangu River are the popular tourist destinations of Bandarban. Khagrachari is famous for its cultural heritage, ethnic diversity, and natural beauty. Alutila Hill, Richhang Waterfall, Alutila Cave, Panichari Buddha Sculpture, Sapachari Waterfall, Lakshmichari Waterfall, Mong King's Palace, and Sajek and Marissa Valley are the major tourist destinations of the district.

Table 3: Country-wise Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Bangladesh (2011-19)

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
India	108766	111683	69243	91486	100176	144304	188814	213947	270024
USA	5520	5448	4067	4870	3352	4161	5596	7171	7225
China	3256	3828	3933	5619	3217	5807	6839	6363	7004
Japan	5593	5894	4455	5514	2638	2230	2858	3712	4195
Nepal	2197	2338	1619	1574	1036	2477	2781	2725	2974
UK	4066	3293	2548	3129	1876	2564	3432	3676	2405
S. Korea	1754	1830	1735	1747	1421	1386	1990	2297	2226
Malaysia	1180	1058	847	1385	1007	1636	2335	2601	2225
Australia	1346	1407	1056	1270	735	864	1405	1608	1603
S. Aribia	-	-	317	555	801	2289	1921	1505	1549
Canada	1292	1243	956	1093	790	1023	1196	1402	1535
Germany	1192	1178	997	1105	634	930	1127	1285	1304
Total *	156545	159524	104009	133902	126264	182469	237452	267209	323295

Source: Bangladesh Tourism Board, https://tourismboard.gov.bd/, Note: *shows figure including all countries.

Table 3 represented country-wise foreign tourist arrivals in Bangladesh. It has found that largest number of foreign tourist arrived in Bangladesh from India, followed by United States, China, and Japan. Bangladesh has beautiful sea beaches. Cox's Bazar Beach, Parki beach, Naval Beach, Patenga Beach, Kuakata Beach, and Inani Beach are well-known among the travellers. It has the world largest uninterrupted natural beach. Cox's Bazar is famous for long natural sandy beach. Travellers can involve in horse riding, beach biking, water biking, parasailing, Cox Carnival circus show etc. Tourism is the main economic activity of Cox's Bazar. Himchari National Park, Daria Nagar Ecopark, Aggmeda Khyang, Ramu, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park, Bangabandhu Safari Park, Shishu Parks and numerous photogenic sites are the other beautiful places. Teknaf is the southernmost point in mainland Bangladesh. Travellers can observe the culture of Rakhain and Arkan people. Saint Martin Island is a coral island which situated in Bay of Benal nearly nine kilometres south of Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula. Travellers can enjoy the natural beauties, sunrise and sunset, coconut trees, sandy beaches, and fresh blue water with corals.

Barisal is the southern region of Bangladesh which is well-known among the travellers for warm hospitality, cultural heritage, and natural beauty. Because of the many rivers, it is also called "Venice of Bengal." Barisal city is situated in the bank of Kirtankhola river. It is the third largest economic hub after Dhaka and Chittagong. Durga Sagar, Lakhutia, Oxford Mission Church, Baitul Aman Jame Masjid Complex, Planet Park, Muktijoddha Park, Lakhutia Zamindar Bari, Korapur Miah Bari Masjid, Jibanananda Das Museum, and Lakhutia Shiva Temples are the major tourist attractions in Barisal. Travellers can enjoy the journey Dhaka – Barisal through luxury overnight cruise. Bangladesh has some beautiful lakes. Kaptai Lake, Madhabpur Lake, and Boga Lake are popular among travellers. Madhobpur Lake is a natural lake which situated in Moulvibazar District. Bagakain Lake is natural deep water lake located in the hill district Bandarban. Kaptai Lake is an artificial lake located in Rangamati District. Bangladesh has many ancient ruins and notable sites. Some remarkable antique ruins in Bangladesh include Mainamati, Somapura Mahavihara and Wari-Bateshwar. Other notable heritage sites are National Poet's Grave, Martyred Intellectual Memorial, Jatiyo Shahid Minar, Kantajew Mandir, Sonargaon, and Ahsan Manzil.

Bangladesh has good prospects for growth of religious tourism. Bangladesh is a muslim majority country, where around 90% population are Muslim. Hindus and Buddhist constituted the major portion of the minority population. Star Mosque (Tara Masjid), Shait-Gumbad Mosque, Puthia Temple Complex, Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Buddha Dhatu Jadi, Kantajew Temple, Fakir Lalon Shah's Mazaar, Chandanpura Mosque, Chandranath Temple, Bayazid Bostami Mazar, Guthia Mosque, Dhaka University Central Mosque, Gurudwara Nanak Shahi, Adinath Temple, Chhoto Sona Mosque, Goaldi Mosque, Bagha Mosque, Hoseni Dalan Mosque, Khan Mohammad Mridha Mosque, Kusumba Mosque, Chawkbazar Shahi Mosque, Sat Gumbad Mosque, St. Mary's Cathedral, Tomb of Khan Jahan Ali, Kaibalyadham Ram Thakur Ashram, Bazra Shahi Jam-e-Masjid, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Atiya Jame Mosjid, and Nava Ratna Temple are the

major religious sites. Majority of religious sites belong to Islam religion. Kantajee Temple, Adinath Temple, and Dhakeshwari National Temple are the major Hindu religious sites. Kantanagar Temple is a temple of Kantaji (Krishna) and Rukmini that is located in Dinajpur. Adinath Temple is the temple of Hindu God, Shiva that is located in Maheshkhali Island off the coast of Cox's Bazar. Dhakeshwari National Temple is located in Old Dhaka. It was built in the 12th century.

Rural tourism is a growing area of tourism that has social and economic benefits to rural areas. It can create revenue for local businesses, jobs, preserve local traditions and culture. It involves sightseeing, rural culture, agriculture, nature-based activities, and angling. Places with cultural, wildlife, and natural beauty are suitable for rural tourism. Sundarbans, Bandarban, Rangamati, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar are more suitable for rural tourism. Sundarbans has the largest mangrove forest. Boating facilities are available and travellers can see the wildlife in mangrove forest. Bandarban situated in Chittagong Hill Tracts. It has the highest peak, hiking trails, and waterfalls. Rangamati is popular for beautiful landscapes, and home to indigenous communities. Sylhet is well-known for its natural beauty and tea gardens. Jaflong of Sylhet is called “daughter of nature.” Cox's Bazar has a long sandy beach. Other attractions include seafood, temples, pagodas, surfing, and cliffs. Heritage sites in Bangladesh are popular among the tourists. Lalbagh Fort, Mahasthangarh, Lalmai-Mainamati Group of monuments, Architectural Works of Muzharul Islam, Sundarbans, Mosque City of Bagerhat, Independence Monument, Kantajew Temple, Jamdani weaving, and Saint Martin's Island are popular heritage sites.

Bangladesh has untapped potential of agri-tourism. Traditional agricultural practices and vibrant farming communities are the asset of the nation which are base of agri-tourism. Through such tourism travellers can observe the farm works, diverse rural landscape and rich agricultural heritage of Bangladesh. Jashore and Sylhet are the best place for such tourism. Char land cultivation, hill farming, floating gardens on the wetlands of Barishal, Chandpur's hilsa, Bagerhat's shrimp, Jhalakathi's guavas, and Tangail's pineapples has unique attractions among the travellers. Government is also promoting the homestays and organic farms. Bangladesh has many unspoiled and untapped tracks including beaches, hills, waterways, and flatlands. There are more opportunities of adventure tourism in Bangladesh. Travellers can involve in both Hard adventure and soft adventure activities. Traveller explore new places through mountain biking, walking, camping, birdwatching, safari, hiking, rafting, scuba, hot air ballooning, paragliding, rock climbing, trekking, cycling, caving, and swimming. Bangladesh has many cannels and rivers. There is more scope of coastal and back water tours.

Bangladesh has one game reserve, five conservation sites, seven wildlife sanctuaries, and eight national parks. Nijhum Dwip National Park, Ramsagar National Park, Satchari National Park, and Shingra National Park are larger. Public library are scatters in all over the nation. Sufia Kamal National Public Library, Rajshahi Public Library, Chandpur Public Library, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, Muslim Institute Library, Sylhet Mushtak Chy Public Library, Durbar Songho Gronthagar, Projonmo, Bondhon Gronthagar, and Maruf Sharmeen Smrity Sonstha Library are some popular public library. Bangladesh also have many zoos which attracts national and international travellers. Some well-known zoos are Bangladesh National Zoo, Recreation Park and Rangpur Zoo, Chittagong Zoo, Dulahazra Safari Park, and Dhaka Zoo.

Bangladesh is famous for delicious desserts and foods. Rice with Curry, Daal, Vaji, fish, and Vorta are the traditional foods. Hilsa is a popular and national fish. Shutki, or dried fish is consumed everywhere. Sweets are easily available everywhere. Sondesh, Gulab jamun, Kalo Jamun, Rosagolla, Chom Chom, and Rosamalai are the popular Sweets. Most popular Bangladeshi foodare Ilish Curry (Hilsa Curry), Kacchi Biryani (Raw meat Biryani), Bhuna Khichuri, Beef Kala Bhuna, Shami Kebab, Seekh Kebab, Dal, Bhorta, Fuchka, and Chom-Chom.Snacks, such as masala puri, dahi chaat, bhel puri, panipuri, kachori, and many more distinct variations are also easily available. Traditional breakfast consists of flour-based flatbreads such as paratha, roti, and chapati served with a curry. Curry can be scrambled eggs (dim vaji), lentil (dal), home-fried potatoes (alu vaji), mixed vegetables (sobji), and many others.

Table 4: Relation between International Tourist arrivals and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Bangladesh

Year	International Tourist arrivals	Gross Domestic Product
2014	134,000	172.9
2015	126,000	195.1
2016	182,000	265.2
2017	237,000	293.7
2018	267,000	321.4
2019	323,000	351.2
2020	50,000	374.0
2021	190,000	416.3
2022	250,000	460.1
2023	300,000	437.4

Source: https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/bangladesh/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL, Note: figure of GDP in billion.

Table 4 (a): Summary Output

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.424081196
R Square	0.179844861
Adjusted R Square	0.077325469
Standard Error	94.30396349
Observations	10

Source: Calculated by author.

Table 4 (b): ANOVA Analysis

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	15600.98077	15600.98077	1.754252118	0.221928347
Residual	8	71145.90023	8893.237529		
Total	9	86746.881			

Source: Calculated by author.

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	228.544148	81.30785378	2.810849597	0.022813178
International Tourist arrivals	0.000486575	0.00036737	1.32448183	0.221928347

Source: Calculated by author.

The table (4-a) shows that R square is found to be 0.179844861, showing that the degree of relation between the independent variable X, i.e. arrivals of tourists, and the dependent variable Y, i.e. gross domestic product is weak. Table (4-b) shows that p value (0.22) is higher than critical value at 5% level of significance ($p > 0.05$), therefore we will accept the null hypothesis-2. So, it is concluded that there is no relation between international tourist arrivals and gross domestic product in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh transport facility dominated by roadways. Dhaka, with divisional and district headquarters, are well connected by eight highways. Dhaka-Chittagong Highway is the backbone of the nation. Bangladesh's public transportation sector is facing challenges due to insufficient government investment, poor quality vehicles, and inadequate infrastructure. Water, road and air transport facilities are available. The Dhaka-Burimari route is the longest railway line in Bangladesh. Travellers can use three international airports, namely Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka. Shah Amanat International Airport, Chattogram, and Osmani International Airport, Sylhet. There are nearly 32 foreign carriers operating to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. There are many riverine ports. Ashuganj ghat and Pangaon are vital hubs for moving goods and people. Padma Bridge, Bangabandhu Bridge, Meghna Bridge, Rupsha Bridge, Keane Bridge, Shah Amanat Bridge, and Taltoli Bridge are the prominent bridges.

Table 5: SWOT Analysis of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

Strength	**Weakness**
Unique culture	Lack of fund for development
Rich history and heritage	Lack of transparency in policies
Lots of tourists places	Lack of adequate infrastructural support
Scenic beauty of the nature	Inadequacy of infrastructure
Historical monuments	Lack of proper rule and regulations
Hospitable people	Safety and security
Opportunities	**Threat**
New Tourism Products and Innovations.	Environmental factors
Increased disposable incomes of people	Stiff competition from other states
High potential for eco-tourism	Lack of safeguard
Improvement of medical facilities	Disaster strike
Opportunity for helipad development	Global warming and conflict in Myanmar.

(b) The Economic Perspectives, Challenges and Government Initiatives

Tourism is a growing industry in Bangladesh. There are many factors responsible behind its growth, but the prominent factors are policies of the government, and rising appeal from traveller to travel. Revenue from the tourism industry was $357 million, $391 million, and $218 million respectively in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Tourism contributed nearly $1,157 million between 2009 and 2018. Contribution of the tourism industry in GDP was 2.4% (USD 8.1 billion), 2.3% (USD 9.5 billion), and 2.3% (USD 10.2 billion) respectively in 2019, 2023 and

2024. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC's) predicted that the contribution of the tourism industry will be USD 16.7 billion in 2034. According to WTTC's report, the tourism industry contributed 2.6% (1.74 million) of overall jobs in 2019, 3% (2.14 million) in 2023, and 3% (2.18 million) in 2024. WTTC's report states that domestic visitor spending was respectively USD 6.98 billion, USD 8.6 billion, and USD 8.6 billion in 2019, 2023, and 2024. WTTC's report states that domestic visitor spending was respectively USD 326.8 million, USD 401.5 million, and USD 414.0 million in 2019, 2023, and 2024.

Table 6: Contribution of Tourism in South Asian Countries

Country	% GDP	Country	% GDP
Bhutan	5.0	Pakistan	5.9
Bangladesh	2.3	Sri Lanka	6.1
India	5.8	Maldives	30
Nepal	6.7	Afghanistan	-

Source: Department of Tourism of the concern countries.

Table 6 describes the contribution of tourism in South Asian countries. It has found that the economy of the island country Maldives is dependent on the tourism sector. Contribution of the tourism sector in the economy of Maldives is 30%. Contribution of the tourism sector in GDP of Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and India varies between 5-6%. Contribution of the tourism sector in GDP of Bangladesh is lower than the other south Asian countries.

Tourism industry in Bangladesh has challenges. Some of them are inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of accommodation and recreation facilities, lack of safety and security, political instability, lack of professionalism, backward communication, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, inadequate allocation in the national budget, high prices of tourist products, cross border regulations, and weak promotion. Managing tourism is the biggest challenge, due to impacts on environment, local culture and the overall tourism experience. Travellers need to beware of pickpockets.

The Government of Bangladesh implemented multiple policies for sustainable development of the tourism industry. It will contribute to the country's social and economic development. The National Tourism Policy was established in 1992. The major aims of the policy are attracting foreign exchange, open opportunities for investment, increase opportunities for budget tourism for Bangladeshis, create a more favourable image of the country, alleviate poverty, and maintain the country's tourism resources. Government declared tourism as a thrust sector in Industrial Policy of Bangladesh, 1999. For increasing the legislative and institutional capacities of the tourism sector, the government has passed two bills, (a) Bangladeshi Protected Tourism Area and Special Tourism Zone Bill 2010; and (b) Bangladesh Tourism Board Bill 2010.

CONCLUSION

Bangladesh's tourism industry is developing, with the potential to grow. Be that as it may, the industry faces challenges such as a need for foundation, security concerns, and constrained advancement. Tourism in Bangladesh incorporates tourism to World Legacy Destinations, authentic landmarks, resorts, shorelines, outing spots, timberlands, tribal individuals, and natural life of different species. Bangladesh offers numerous visitor attractions, counting archaeological destinations, verifiable mosques and landmarks, longest normal shoreline within the world, pleasant scenery, slope woodlands and natural life, rolling tea gardens and tribes. Cox's Bazar is the longest unbroken sea beach in the world and the tourist capital of Bangladesh. Dhaka the capital and largest city of Bangladesh is known the world over as the 'City of Mosques'.

Tourism impacts visitor goals in both positive and negative ways, enveloping financial, political, socio-cultural, natural, and mental measurements. Tourism too has positive and negative wellbeing results for nearby individuals. There are a number of benefits for the community as a result of tourism. This incorporates financial benefits such as openings for nearby businesses which permits for expanded exchange among the expanded number of guests and after that creates an assortment of nearby businesses. Tourism can be beneficial for the community because it gives the budgetary implications and the motivating force to protect social histories, nearby legacy destinations, and traditions. It fortifies intrigue in neighbourhood creates, conventional exercises, tunes, move, and verbal histories. Over a long time, Bangladesh has created an interesting and alluring tourism advertisement that has extended its industry due to its characteristic magnificence. The climate in Bangladesh is exceptionally pleasant and makes it an ideal goal for visitors from around the world.

Tourism is one of the profitable sectors in Bangladesh. Tourism sector of Bangladesh is facing many obstacles. This study found that good communication services, recreation opportunities, tourist spot cleanliness, shopping facilities, tourist spot attractions, washroom and toilet facilities, availability of emergency services, good residential facilities, excellent attitudes of local people, and security and safety are the vital components for viable advancement of Bangladesh's tourism industry. Sustainability of tourism attraction, waste management system implementation,

superstructure development, and appropriate infrastructure construction and sustainability for future generations are all critical. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) looks after the tourism sector in Bangladesh under the ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

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